



As summer days grow shorter, Michigan communities are observing that timeless annual ritual: **the first day of school**. The beginning of school is also a time when children are at increased risk of transportation related injuries from pedestrian, bicycle, school bus, and motor vehicle crashes. Many more children are on the road each morning and afternoon and drivers' patterns change. So as schools open their doors and more than 1.6 million students return to school in the state, it's time for everyone – motorists, parents, educators, and students – to improve their traffic safety practices

### **TIPS FOR ALL MOTORISTS**

- **Slow down** and obey all traffic laws and speed limits.
- **Red overhead flashing lights, possibly accompanied by an extended stop arm tell you the school bus is stopped to load or unload children.** State law requires you to **stop at least 20 feet** from the front or rear of the school bus when red lights are flashing and not proceed until such school bus resumes motion, or until signaled by the school bus driver to proceed.
- Be alert and ready to stop. **Prepare to stop for a school bus when overhead yellow lights are flashing. Driver with caution if you see the yellow hazard warning lights are flashing on a moving or stopped bus.** Watch for children walking in the street, especially where there are no sidewalks. Watch for children playing and gathering near bus stops. Watch for children arriving late for the bus, who may dart into the street without looking for traffic. When backing out of a driveway or leaving a garage, watch for children walking or biking to school.

### **TIPS FOR PARENTS**

- Help your children learn and practice the safety rules for walking, bicycling, or riding in a passenger car, school bus or transit bus. Be a good role model, especially when you are with your kids. Always buckle up in the car, always wear a helmet when biking, and always follow pedestrian safety rules.
- Supervise young children walking or biking to school or as they wait at the school bus stop.

### **TIPS FOR EDUCATORS**

- Teach young children the safety rules for traveling to school, whether it be walking, bicycling, or riding in a motor vehicle or on a school bus.
- AAA Michigan's annual "School's Open – Drive Carefully" campaign alerts motorists to the special risks to school-age children from motor vehicles. Through a partnership with the Auto Club, MacDonald's Restaurants will feature table tent cards with back-to-school safety until September 30. Other materials are available from the Auto Club by calling 313.336.1412 or visit on the web at [www.aaapublicaffairs.com](http://www.aaapublicaffairs.com)
- Check out the downloadable kid-friendly traffic safety materials developed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration at NHTSA's website: [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov) (also has other safety links)

### **TIPS FOR STUDENTS**

- If you ride a school bus, learn and practice the safety rules for waiting at the bus stop, getting on and off the bus, and riding the bus. If you walk to school, learn and practice the safety rules for pedestrians. Always cross at cross walks, obey all traffic signs, traffic lights and safety patrol instructions.
- Buckle up when you're riding in a car and ride in the backseat. It's the safest place for young people. Be a good role model for your younger brothers and sisters and friends, and help them learn and practice the safety rules.